TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that I, Phil R. Stillwell, a citizen of the United States of America, residing at 401 Oliver Trail Lane, Phenix City, Alabama, 36867, have invented new and useful improvements in a

HEADWEAR AND CLOTHING PACKAGING SYSTEM AND METHOD

of which the following is a specification.

TITLE OF THE INVENTION
HEADWEAR AND CLOTHING PACKAGING SYSTEM AND METHOD

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention is generally related to the display and packaging of items that can be worn and, more particularly, is related to a system and method for packaging headwear and clothing.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Hats are a popular clothing item used for various purposes and made in various shapes and sizes. One type of hat is the sock-type hat. The sock-hat is commonly worn when skiing, hunting, or engaging in any outdoors activity in cold weather. Although sock-hats are warm they are also a popular fashion item.

The sock-hat is typically made of a material that stretches and fits on the wearer's head at an open bottom portion. The top portion is typically closed and is configured in a dome shape on the wearer's head. The sock-hat is flimsy and difficult to fold or maintain in an orderly manner when not being worn. Therefore, these hats are difficult to display in an attractive manner when marketing and selling them. They can also take up more room in a store than necessary due to the difficulty in displaying them in an orderly manner. In fact, these hats are often thrown in a basket or bin in a retail store and the consumer is left with the arduous task of digging through a stack of hats to find the color, design, size, etc. that the consumer is looking for. Such sock-hats are also sometimes displayed on racks designed to hold the hat in an expanded, flattened configuration. These racks take up considerable room in a store.

Because the sock-hat is a popular fashion item, consumers often want to match the hat with another article of clothing, such as a shirt, or shorts. In order to match the hat with another article of clothing, in addition to the consumer spending time digging

through a pile of hats the consumer must also search for an article of clothing that matches or compliments the hat.

Thus, a heretofore unaddressed need exists in the industry to address the aforementioned deficiencies and inadequacies.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Preferred embodiments of the present invention provide a headwear and clothing packaging system and method. Briefly described, in architecture, one embodiment of the system can be implemented as follows. A headwear and clothing packaging system comprises headwear having a bottom portion and a top portion, the headwear having an expanded state, a collapsed state, and a storage state. The expanded state of the headwear is defined by the bottom portion being open such that the headwear forms an open dome. The collapsed state of the headwear is defined by the bottom portion being closed by flattening the bottom portion onto itself such that the headwear forms a flat dome. The storage state is defined by the headwear being disposed in the collapsed state and deformed around an axis transverse to a width measurement taken along the bottom portion of the hat. The storage state can also be defined by the headwear being disposed in the collapsed state and deformed around an axis parallel to the width measurement taken along the bottom portion of the hat. Clothing is rolled in a cylinder shape and a holding element is positioned around the hat deformed in the storage state, which is positioned around the rolled clothing.

Preferred embodiments of the present invention can also be viewed as providing a method of storing headwear and clothing. In this regard, one embodiment of such a method, among others, can be broadly summarized by the following steps: providing headwear having a bottom portion and a top portion, the headwear having an expanded state, a collapsed state, and a storage state; providing clothing; providing a holding element; deforming the headwear into the storage state; rolling the clothing into a cylinder shape; disposing the headwear around the clothing; and fixing the headwear around the clothing with the holding element.

Other systems, methods, features, and advantages of the present invention will be or become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following drawings and detailed description. It is intended that all such additional systems, methods, features, and advantages be included within this description, be within the scope of the present invention, and be protected by the accompanying claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Many aspects of the invention can be better understood with reference to the following drawings. The components in the drawings are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon clearly illustrating the principles of the present invention. Moreover, in the drawings, like reference numerals designate corresponding parts throughout the several views.

FIG. 1 is a bottom perspective view of an embodiment of an article of headwear of the headwear and clothing packaging system of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a front view of another embodiment of the article of headwear illustrated in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the piece of headwear illustrated in FIG. 1 configured in the headwear and clothing packaging system of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the headwear and clothing packaging system of the present invention illustrated in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the headwear and clothing packaging system of the present invention illustrated in FIG. 3.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the headwear and clothing packaging system of the present invention illustrated in FIG. 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

FIG. 1 illustrates one preferred embodiment of an article of headwear, a hat 10, of the storage system of the present invention. The hat 10 is formed of a bottom portion 12 and a top portion 14. FIG. 1 illustrates the hat 10 in an expanded state 100 such that the

bottom portion 12 defines an opening 16. When the hat 10 is worn, the opening 16 receives the wearer's head (not shown) and encircles the wearer's head in order to keep the hat 10 in the appropriate position. The top portion 14 covers the top of the wearer's head (not shown).

FIG. 2 illustrates one preferred embodiment of the hat 10 disposed in a collapsed state 200. In the collapsed state 200 the bottom portion 12, as well as the whole hat 10, is disposed in contact with itself and the opening 16 is closed. An axis, "A", is perpendicular to a width measurement, "W", of the bottom portion 12 of the hat 10. Another axis, "B", is parallel to the width measurement, "W", of the bottom portion 12 of the hat 10.

FIG. 3 illustrates one embodiment of the headwear and clothing storage system 300 of the present invention. The hat 10 is disposed in the collapsed state 200 (FIG. 2) and deformed around the axis "A" (FIG. 2). This configuration is one embodiment of a storage state of the hat 10. In this configuration the hat 10 is deformed around the axis "A" in the shape of an arc. An article of clothing 18 is rolled into a cylinder shape, or deformed in any suitable manner. The article of clothing 18 can comprise a shirt, such as a T-shirt, a pair of shorts, or any desired article of clothing. The hat 10 is wrapped around the clothing 18. A holding element 20 is disposed around the hat 10 in order to fix the hat 10 in the arc shape. The holding element 20 also maintains the clothing 18 in the rolled cylinder configuration and holds the hat 10 and the clothing 18 in contact with each other. The holding element 20 can comprise a non-elastic band, an elastic band, a string, a strap, or any suitable member.

FIG. 4 illustrates another embodiment of the headwear and clothing storage system 400 of the present invention. The hat 10 is disposed in the collapsed state 200 (FIG. 2) and deformed around the axis "A" (FIG. 2). This configuration is one embodiment of a storage state of the hat 10. In this configuration the hat 10 is deformed around the axis "A" in the shape of a cylinder. An article of clothing 18 is rolled into a cylinder shape, or deformed in any suitable manner. The article of clothing 18 can comprise a shirt, such as a T-shirt, a pair of shorts, or any desired article of clothing. The hat 10 is wrapped around the clothing 18 such that the hat 10 wraps all the way around

the clothing 18 until ends of the hat 10 are in contact with each other or overlapping each other. A holding element 20 is disposed around the hat 10 in order to fix the hat 10 in a cylindrical shape. The holding element 20 also maintains the clothing 18 in the rolled cylinder configuration and holds the hat 10 and the clothing 18 in contact with each other. The holding element 20 can comprise a non-elastic band, an elastic band, a string, a strap, or any suitable member.

FIG. 5 illustrates another embodiment of the headwear and clothing storage system 500 of the present invention. The hat 10 is disposed in the collapsed state 200 (FIG. 2) and deformed around the axis "B" (FIG. 2). This configuration is one embodiment of a storage state. In this configuration the hat 10 is deformed around the axis "B" in the shape of an arc. An article of clothing 18 is rolled into a cylinder shape, or deformed in any suitable manner. The article of clothing 18 can comprise a shirt, such as a T-shirt, a pair of shorts, or any desired article of clothing. The hat 10 is wrapped around the clothing 18. A holding element 20 is disposed around the hat 10 in order to fix the hat 10 in the arc shape. The holding element 20 also maintains the clothing 18 in the cylinder configuration and holds the hat 10 and the clothing 18 in contact with each other. The holding element 20 can comprise a non-elastic band, an elastic band, a string, a strap, or any suitable member.

FIG. 6 illustrates another embodiment of the headwear storage system 600 of the present invention. The hat 10 is disposed in the collapsed state 200 (FIG. 2) and deformed around the axis "B" (FIG. 2). This configuration is one embodiment of a storage state. In this configuration the hat 10 is deformed around the axis "B" in the shape of a cylinder. An article of clothing 18 is rolled into a cylinder shape, or deformed in any suitable manner. The article of clothing 18 can comprise a shirt, such as a T-shirt, a pair of shorts, or any desired article of clothing. The hat 10 is wrapped around the clothing 18 such that the hat 10 wraps all the way around the clothing 18 until ends of the hat 10 are in contact with each other or overlapping each other. A holding element 20 is disposed around the hat 10 in order to fix the hat 10 in the cylinder shape. The holding element 20 also maintains the clothing 18 in the cylinder configuration and holds the hat

10 and the clothing 18 in contact with each other. The holding element 20 can comprise a non-elastic band, an elastic band, a string, a strap, or any suitable member.

It should be emphasized that the above-described embodiments of the present invention, particularly, any "preferred" embodiments, are merely possible examples of implementations, merely set forth for a clear understanding of the principles of the invention. Many variations and modifications may be made to the above-described embodiment(s) of the invention without departing substantially from the spirit and principles of the invention. All such modifications and variations are intended to be included herein within the scope of this disclosure and the present invention and protected by the following claims.